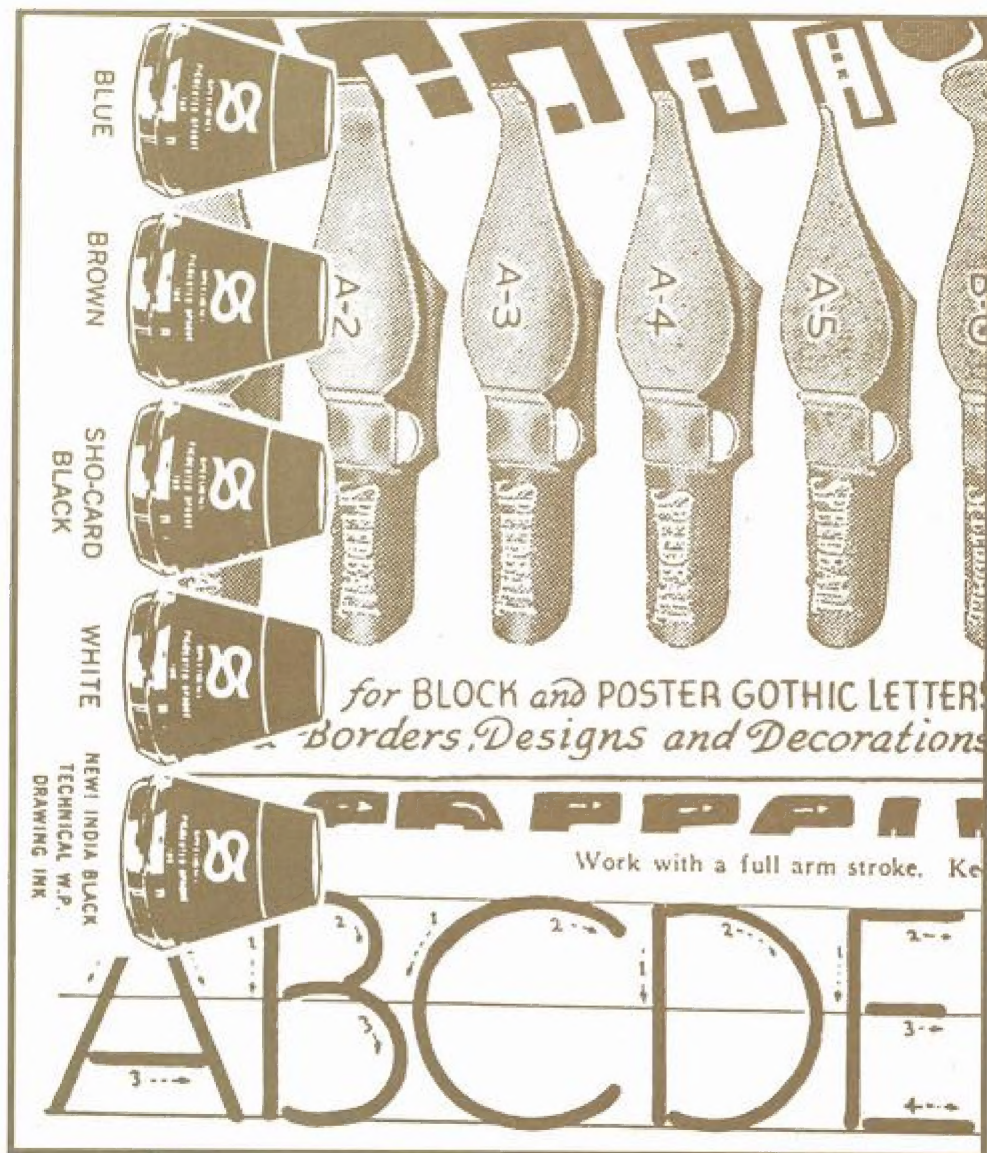


the minstrel

Redeemer College's Poetry
and Fiction Magazine



volume 4, spring 1994

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The Minstrel, Vol. IV 1993-1994

editors' notes

Anyone out there who would like to be the editor for this esteemed literary treatise next year? Talk to Carl or I ASAP.

Lara Schat
Co-Editor

Here on Gilligan's Island!
"Skip-per!"

Carl Jagt
Co-Editor

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1. We are separate

I'm tired in this late evening weather
but I long to connect with my pained, fragile friend
who flew fast...and left without the wind-clipped sound
of wings...to collapse in some other time frame.

This explosive truth is all too real--and who can heal?
How can I crush your terror and calm your pain?

2. We are re-united

If our present prayers affect the future,
can our prayers for the past change the present?
No time to ponder this idea...
as I stumble into this recently erupted volcano with you
Fall on the brutally hot ashes and let them burn us
till all is exposed.
Feel and scream out reality and allow ourselves to
live on this side of truth for a while.
Then we yearn for a spirit of gentleness
to quell our hate and fear.
And throw the ash to the wind.
Come, Comforter, brush up close to my friend
Dwell with her here, in this place, in this time space.
Draw near to cool this exploded truth
and revive hope in her being once again.

Hype-for S.V.
Hanna Van Dyke

The Minstrel is a yearly showcase of the literary and visual arts at Redeemer College. It is written, edited, and designed by students. *The Minstrel* encourages the reader to discuss the works presented with the authors. This publication is funded by Student Senate. In the preparation of *The Minstrel*, the editors have been advised by Professor Hugh Cook.

Nothing

I used to write poems,
No one would read them.
I used to write songs,
No one would sing them.
I used to paint paintings,
No one would look at them.
So now I do nothing.

Krista Veening

Yesterday

Dead, dead, dead.
What else can I say.
Everything is dead.
Except the flowers.
The ones you gave me.
Yesterday.

Krista Veening

Blank Pages

Blossoming flowers
The bridge sails by
Which way to go?
Higher, higher

The laughing spider
A screaming gnome
Crazy eights
Buzzing by

The sun shines
Paradise in leaves
Water flows
A squinting eye

An owl drowns
A sea of moons
Fancy ladies
Heads fly away

Krista Veening

ALMOST FOREVER

I've loved you for a year,
And eight months since.
You thought you loved me
forever.

I've played inside your head
In four turns I lost the game.
You said you loved me forever.

I gave you a flower.
The summer was ours.
We'll love the idea forever.

I gave you everything I knew.
I never knew enough to give.
You wanted to love me forever.

I felt forever in your kiss.
And learned this about forever:

Almost forever
Is not even half way there.

Richard Tomlin

The Day the Eyebali Fell Out

Once the body was whole.
The arms and legs were walking and holding, although sometimes
Them left hand knew not what the right hand was doing.
The body was healthy and happy.
One day the right eye began to see other things and tore
itself away from the body.
As soon as the eyeball fell out it landed in the mud and
became a dirty and detestable thing.
The rest of the body experienced great pain and was
incomplete.
The rest of the body was still beautiful but the gaping hole
where the eye had fallen out of could not be ignored.
The eyeball started to change.
It lost all happiness, all hope and all its beauty.
Being that it was an eye, it looked back kat the rest of
the body which was still beautiful and it then realized
its own ugliness,
"It is worse for me now than if I had never joined the
body in the first place."
Though afraid of being rejected by the body because
of what it had done, the eye decided to return
The body accepted the eye back with arms wide open
and look! The body, the whole body, was beautiful again.

Karen Miller

LOVE TO ME

(dedicated to Lisa on our engagement)

Love to me is different it can't be touched or seen
And love has made me happier than I have ever been.
Love is something special it can't be bought or sold
And love grows warmer even if our bodies are so old.
Love to me is an eagle that takes me far away
From the pain and loneliness trapped in yesterday.
Love to me is tender and gentle in its touch
And love is so that I can never, ever get too much.
Love to me is sweeter than anything I know
And love to me is constant its warmth will always show.
Love to me is all this and never fades away
And love to me is special it grows in me each day.
All of this is love and all of this is true
And love to me is beautiful for love (to me) is you.

Mike Hilvers

The Fate of Thomas Brady

He left in the morning to see his lady
He was tall and handsome, Thomas Brady.
He went on the trail that headed down West,
He started out, looking his best.
Dressed in black pants and white shirt was he,
The finest dressed man you ever did see.
He walked on land on, he walked through the night,
He just trudged on, 'till her house came in sight.
He was a tired old man, for the day had run through,
But that was all right, if her heart remained true.
He came to the door, tired and cold,
He knocked three times, hard and bold.
HE waited there, by the window and through the frost,
Standing cold, he would see his girl at any cost.
He knocked once again and began to think;
He though hard as his heart began to sink.
Was there something he missed, a birthday or celebration;
HE leaned against the door as if in meditation.
When was her birthday, was it in May?
June or July, Tom could not say.
And then he admitted he knew all along;
And that inside he knew he was wrong.
It was a year ago when they had the right,
'She was stubborn,' so he struck her will all his might.
He apologized over and over again,
He knew he committed a most terrible sin.
He fell to his knees searching for a heartbeat,
He searched and pressed, white as a sheet.
He found a pulse and thanked his God in Heaven;
"Forgive me, Lord," he said, "not once, but seven times seven."
Then his lady, she rose and fled in fear;
Because of the fact that Thomas Brady was near.
He went back to his house and never left since that night
"Til he read his scripture, and started to see the light.
So he went to her house to ask forgiveness of his sin,
And he wanted to see his lady again.
Well, he waited at her door, until a man replied,
"Oh, that lady, I'm sorry, sir, it was a month ago she died."
So there stood Thomas Brady, a man who had to cry,
Thinking to himself, "If she died, then so must I."
He went back home and took a knife
In a second, it was over, all the hurt and strife.
So...that night he did not see his lady.
Or...did he? No one knows but Thomas Brady.

Jennifer de Kok

Sacrifice

to Margaret Avison with thanks

The world is white and dangerous
just beyond these walls.
The world is howling dangerous
just beyond these walls.
And the world stuffed a snowstorm in
at my eyeballs
when I ventured.

But *my* heart was never optic.
I own a lexic heart.
What words could ring as *my* words do
here within these walls?
I have described the snow-disk-fall:
they never once
"trundled" for me.

Oh angst is a fashionable guest and easy to acquire but a hard inhabitant to evict once he's made his home within you. In my angst I saw a moose on the cover of a magazine and wanted to be a moose, to live a simple life of cud and crud and sleeping. But there was a caption under the picture of a drowned and gutted mother moose which spoke to me of moose-life better than my wishes had: "It is unbelievably tough. I wouldn't want to be one."

I am trundling
I trundle with the wheels of snow
trundling unwilling
down and ever down
And though I am and know I am
I wouldn't want to be one.

"DON'T FORGET SACRIFICE,"
you said quietly
and struck me dumb
at the poetry lecture.
You made me dumb.
The host called you "stubbornly humble."
But you were humble and wide.

The world is also wide.
And the world is white
And the world is dangerous
And the world is afire with snow.

There was lightning with the snow tonight. I was driving
home from the poetry lecture in a blizzard. And all ways
through the snowy air, electric twigs of hyssop cracked.

Lightning!

Whitening.

Whiter than white
and snowier than snow.

And disks of snow
slashed in at my face
when I left the car's warmth
(my socks thin and pinching,
emergency lights blinking
reproof at my curses,
snow-drifts blanketing
half the highway)

when I knelt to grope for
a flown wiper blade
in the roadside snow
halfway between Paris and Waterloo.

And though I didn't need any charity from
the five cars that passed in the storm, I was disgusted
that no one stopped to offer this stranger oil or jumper cables.

Grand River was black in the storm
And socketed with whirlpool holes.
I shuddered to imagine it:
Appalling energy twisting,
Alive with undrinkable
Mystery just beyond the shore.

My teachers always told me:
 "Don't stuff forks in
 at electrical wall sockets!"
But I always wondered
 at their wisdom.
 What if I did?
What would happen then?

 "Don't tempt him!" they'd say,
 "the unknown one,
 the freezing burning white-hot one,
The fork-demanding
 socket-demon
 just beyond this wall!
That demon brings consumption!"

But watch me finger the socket-holes;
I am tempting that white and mighty
Electrical fiend to taste me.
So this must be the whirlpool then.
The moment for decision comes;
The swimmer circles the whirlpool. . .

Please believe this: although I love your work as well
as I can, my going to Galt tonight was not a pilgrimage
but an accident of snow-blind navigation.

And since I was in Galt anyway,
I went to laugh at the library
(having heard its architect
tell of its beauty earlier today
and knowing better).

But I ended up taking
shelter under its artless roof
and sat with Galtic strangers
warm in a steeple-windowed
heaven of books—safe
from the snow in the arms
of municipal charity.

I only learned of your
Galtic birth later, after hours
in driving snow, when
I read a book-jacket biography.

And I was proud that I almost finished reading
three of your poems before I had to write something
myself. And in a heat, I wrote this cold poem.

The world writes poems in the white of snow.
And the world is cracking twigs of hyssop.
And the world is getting dangerous.
And I am getting warm but getting very cold.

“don’t forget sacrifice,” you said
and—wonder of wonders—muted me!
I had been speaking of God’s Love
and love of the neighbour.
But I never knew my
young, untasting tongue
was so translucent.

I am twisting at the current’s whims
I twist
twisting unswimming
in and ever in
And yes, I can swim.
But it seems easier to drown.

What do you make of coincidence? I’m making a poem myself. The plastic strands of tonight’s events are twisting into each other like the blue-and-white friendship-bracelet the girl wore—the girl that watched the swimming pool when I was twelve and kept me safe from drowning. Hers were the mysteries of fidelity and preservation, meaningless to me. And like her little token of communion, these events exclude me from their deeper function. I am moved but remind myself: only girls ever taste their tears. I wouldn’t want to be one.

A pickup truck was stuck tonight
 wheeling and tailing
On the crest of a Galt hill
 fighting for the top.
I spent twenty minutes below him
 wondering if
 I should help.

But the snow bites bitter and hard
 just beyond this wall.
And the radio announces
 the awful speed of the wind.
And there is lightning with the snowstorm
 and a car—bumper-up—
 in a ditch nearby.

When the world is whiter than I am
It is better to stay indoors.
When I hear the whistle of window-crack wind
I will not tempt the socket-demon.

No. The wheel must spin once more in the snow.
I will get through the whirlpool;
I must get through the whirlpool
before the twine can encircle my wrist.
Then I may help the pickup truck
 up to the lip of the hill.
Then my sockets will be
 stuffed with forks.
Then my walls will be punched holy
 by the dangerous wind
 and the scorching snow
 and the tough bull-headed antlers
 and that white cracking fire
 that I
 perhaps
 invited.

I may even learn to read
other people's poetry and love it
and infect stupid young poets
with the love of other people's poems
as you did—as you couldn't help but do—today.

Begun—March 5, 1993 (after he saw lightning in the snow)
Completed—March 5, 1994 (after tasting the salt in his tears)

Dennis VanStaaldouin

THE CUP

My name is Alison. That's usually where I begin.
It's a handle, a way for you to grasp which person is me, or to hold my attention.

BUT my name is on the outside
separate from the vessel of my body
which holds the water of my soul
unless you raise me to your lips
take the time to drink in my spirit
you know nothing more than my name
you don't know my personality my
personal history my passions
my problems and if
no one around knows me
I begin to dissolve
disappear disperse
disassemble
because how can I
exist when there is no one
around to exist
for to
confirm
that I am
indeed
myself?

BUT I am forgetting
forgetting Someone whose comprehension surpasses my own
Someone whose divine, colossal knowing brought me into Existence
caused my life to commence with a thought,
conceived in His mind.

This One knows my history—He was there at every instant;
Knows my personality, my passions—He created them;
Knows my problems—He bears them on His shoulders.
And He makes me more solid, more real,
Than any human knowing ever could.

I have been afraid to be poured out and spilt,
Perhaps rejected or found stale.
And I have been afraid to beg a drop from your cup,
Fearing there are already too many who partake,
Leaving no room for other thirsty guests,

BUT He fills my cup—to overflowing—there can be no waste.
So I will ask for courage,
Courage to turn strangers into friends.
There is much in me that I can share with you,
To refresh you,
And quench your desire for knowing, and being known
But one must start somewhere.
So you can begin with my name.
My name is Alison.

BUT my friends call me Ali.

Alison Gresik

My Dear Son

1994 05 29

It was so very good to hear your voice again;
and to know that you and the family have safely returned from the Orient.

I was so excited last night to hear your voice again that I could not sleep.

Also,

I feared that I had just dreamt it all.
But no!

The children must have grown so much.
Have there been any new arrivals?

I pray that the years were a success and that you may all have grown in your discoveries.

I hope that you will come to see me soon!
It will be good to celebrate birthdays and Christmas together again.

I've really missed those gatherings these past two years.

Well, I won't prattle on any longer.
I don't want to take too much of your time

Love Mother

The Mother of Brian Fellows passed away peacefully at home on June 2, 1993, in her 70th year. Grandmother to Jessica, Timothy and Jason.

Diana Mostert

Let the Children Come

The first cry I heard shook me from my drowsy half-sleep to instant alertness. The sound was so faint I thought it might be a fragment of a dream or some unreal creation of my imagination. But the cry came again, this time more pleading, more pitiful. It was my brother, choking on his own breath, still sleeping and unaware of his distress.

I feared I made too much noise as I bounded up the stairs. I hurried not so much for his sake as for my own. I wanted to reach him before my parents woke, so that the privilege of comforting him would be mine. They had their fill of his voice with its child's accent, his wobbling smile, the touch of his small hands. I needed now to be needed by him.

I am not often home and I miss the little ones most of all. Adults change little but children outgrow phrases and gestures which soon are lost—you cannot even recall them to miss them. All you know is that they are somehow different, older.

Benjamin, the youngest, is only four, but already I can no longer envision what he looked like as a baby. It is as if he has been four his whole life. All I recall about his birth is sitting at home on the stairs, three girls crowded around the phone, waiting to hear whether we had a brother or a sister. We gave the phone to Joanna, who then was three, and she carefully repeated the most important word her father said.

"Boy!"

We must have jumped and shouted together at this wonderful news, but I do not remember any more.

I sometimes wonder if they are actually real. It is a living dream, a miracle that they even exist. When my parents decided to have more children, the doctor said there was a ten percent chance of my mother's becoming pregnant. We did not care what the doctor said. We prayed every day that we would have a baby, and God decided that He did not care what the doctor said either.

I do remember learning of my mother's "first" pregnancy. It was a Christmas morning with piles of paper and presents that hadn't been played with yet, but there was one more envelope on the tree. We read only half of the letter, until we got to the part that said we would have a new sibling, and the paper was thrown in the air and we screamed and jumped and shouted and cried and hugged and I'm sure we made so much noise that the baby heard it too. And maybe she jumped and shouted to know that we wanted her so much.

My parents complain about diapers and late nights and food on their clothes and whispering in church and mud stains and toys all over the floor and bedtimes that take forever and lost mittens and the list never ends. But they know a secret that they do not tell the outsiders. They know that in the midst of the chaotic pre-school tornado, you can sit in a rocking chair and sing a low song, and think, "My life is now complete. I will die happy because I have held this child in my arms."

My "kids" love with abandon. They hold back nothing, and when Ben calls for just one more kiss before bedtime, it is not only a small tactic. It is also an essential part of his tiny world, in which we play the biggest part. When he hugs me, he throws himself at me and clings to my neck and his legs wrapped around and his face nestled against me. He hugs with his whole body, and it is sweetness itself to be able to pick him up and completely envelope him in my arms.

When I come home to visit, I often arrive after they are in bed, and I go into their

room and touch their sleeping cheeks and ache to wake them up. But I leave them undisturbed and wander reluctantly to my bedroom, unfulfilled.

They wake early and sneak giggling and whispering downstairs and pounce on their sleeping sister, and the pain of it cannot touch the pleasure of their joyful smiles and they way I crush them in my arms and snuggle with them under the cave of our covers and laugh at nothing but being together again.

Another night spent in bed together was not filled with laughter. Joanna slept in the top bunk in our cabin at camp, and one night she rolled over too far and fell to the ground. She didn't start to cry until I reached her, and then I saw the blood on her face and I was frightened. But I was also strangely glad, not that she was hurt but that I could comfort her and clean her up and hold her as she cried and stroke her head as she sobbed. She was afraid to get back into her bed so we snuggled into my sleeping bag, and when she cried again I was right there holding her and we fell asleep with our arms around each other. When I woke in the morning, there was blood on my pillow, but it was her blood and it belonged there.

I didn't always take such good care of her. When she was a baby I set her on the floor but she couldn't sit up, so she fell back and hit her head. My parents rushed in when they heard her screaming, but I couldn't admit that I had hurt her myself, so I made something up about dropping her bottle and scaring her with the loud noise. My sorrow was directed not to my parents but to her, for my failure resulting in her pain. She needed me to be careful, because she could not be careful for herself.

And now the little boy needed me. He had croup that night, and I had watched how my mother looked after him the last time he had woken up--I knew what to do. His eyes opened as I lifted him up but he seemed to still be dreaming. I brought water to soothe his throat, and then I covered him with a blanket. He nestled down in it, preparing himself for the cold. I knew I couldn't protect myself and still carry him and walk, but I wasn't afraid of being chilled. Somehow I would endure it until he was better--the sting of the air lost its power because of him.

I opened the door to the porch where the cold air would help his breathing to ease and soften. It shut solidly behind me like the lid of a chest freezer. The icy cement forced my feet to move about so I paced back and forth, holding him.

Then he spoke clearly and firmly, which surprised me because he had only whispered before. It is impossible to record his child-like accent, but he said in that infant voice, "When it's spring, Ali, I'm goin' take off my coat, and walk in the grass with no shoes."

Oblivious to the high drifts outside, the frigid breeze which crept past my thin nightgown, the icy air pinching at his toes, he spoke of soft green grass and yellow sunshine and high white clouds in an azure sky and smell of dirt on your hands and the muddy warmth of rain puddles.

In the midst of the harsh coldness of that midnight, he had the faith and the innocence to dream of spring.

Alison Gresik

June 3, 1993

Hello God
Excuse me Are you there
(I'm talking to the ceiling)
I'll try again God
This I'll do it right
(It's communion time again)
Remember me God
People think we're best friends
(If only they knew)
What did you say God
I must have missed something
(Could it have been important)
I forget God
Do you still love me?
()
Hello God

Bradley J. Cuzen

July 9, 1993

God came down and we went out for coffee.
I asked Him many deep theological questions.
He smiled and spoke only a few words.
He summed up salvation in a sentence.

there must be more i cried
it's all too simple
i can't believe that's all there is
He replied, "There is no more."
i didn't understand and wouldn't believe
God's way was just too simple

i went out for coffee alone last night.

Bradley J. Cuzen

no punctuation please

I wish that I could love you
as much as you love me
but my mind

an ink well overturned
and rolling

down

and around

stamps out the never written words of
Eliot Millay Keates Purdy and Donne
better than acid
like dragging cat s paws across a page

Oil through a coffee filter
Your coathanger television antennae
Things that should never happen
but do

And then I weep for the hobo at
Edward and Yonge
and for the boy in Cambodia
I will never meet

wide pan

and that's when I know

pinpoint

nothing matters but the rhythm
of your silent breathing
across my chest

Craig Nadon

Puppy Love

I will not throw stones at Suzy. I will behave.
I will not throw stones at Suzy. I will behave.
I will not throw stones at Suzy. I will beh hmmm
Suzy I will be - utiful,

beauteous,

beau,

bel,

bella,

beautifully beautiful,

be i

be i in love?

or

is beauty only skin deep?

I will not throw stones at Suzy. I will behave.

John Lise

Inspiration

Something about you inspires me
Maybe it's the cruel things you say.

The knife slides in, once, twice, or more
And from deep within,
My Muse stirs
Like a fretful dragon,
And then is silent.

But at night, when I lie beside you,
Hearing your soft and murmurous snore,
She rouses.

Shrieks of wrath burst from her throat
And I am jolted to rise and write,
With this howling harpy cursing foully at my back,
Driving her poison through my fingertips
Til she is sated.

And then
She slumps, slowly, surely, smoothly
Back to oblivion.
And I remain

Staring at the paper blotched with ink and tears.

As awareness of the night returns
So I return...to you.

Lies van Aaragon

The Devil's Punchbowl

Water falls endlessly filling,
Never close to capacity,
Only enlarging its share
More and more
The granite molds masochistically,
Compliantly fulfilling the fancy of run-off

A cross of light and steel
Overlooks its rim,
Shining forth a new beginning
- God knows the many ends
That it has seen-
Its radiant silence mourns the depths
Of the Devil's Punchbowl

Keith Medenblik

and a million little puppets
jumped onto a great big satellite
and beamed themselves into my home
and their rhetoric lie in a promise
that they were gods of God
that he would give them what they wanted
that he would heal them when they wanted
that he would jump when they told him to
because
they were good christians
and that it was their ordained right
as citizens of the kingdom of heaven
to ask for a big mac fries and a coke
from an omnipotent clerk at mcdonalds
and he
knowing that the customer was always right
would ask if it was take out or eat in
charge them
give them change
and serve it
all
with a free smile

chris cuthill

“WERE HE AS FAMOUS AND AS BOLD IN WAR”

Of Love and War each of us has thought,
They both are true, and both indeed can grow.
When one is here the other's oft' forgot,
But in the end they reap the fruit they sow.

Of Love and War each one of us has fear,
Each takes control and fills our minds with doubt,
And in the end there's nothing left to cheer,
If only we could see what it's about.

Of Love and War each one of us has felt,
And many times we feel they have no point,
The game is over once the cards are dealt,
These two extremes that have no tangent joint.

Of Love and War each one of us has thought,
If man would only love as hard he's fought.

Richard Tomlin

Muffled in this shuffling day
We remain as a myth
Me: dead to the world
 and because you have left yourself conveniently
 out of reach,
We: dead to each other.
Denied, defied, and never quite connected.
Time tried to tell us what could have been
But now nothing can change its unknown will.
We leave,
Being perfectly cold
To the streaming glory of God.

Hype-conforms
Hanna Van Dyke

october dusk

i touch the hem
with black and rotting hands
i went swimming
with little thought of waking
i used to think faith was blind
that october dusk was spiritual
and i wore opaque glasses
as i crawled through the streets
of babylon
fools and fortunate
believe that life is fair
one looked in a mirror
and told their truth to the other
the silver scroll was traded
for beads and fire water
until we were drunk and fancy
telling tales in a bar
and shooting them to satellites
we dressed the groom
in a powdered blue tuxedo
embarrassed
he avoided the chapel
distracted
we didnt notice

chris cuthill

January

Time passes, but nothing changes.
Life drifts by like the blowing snow.
Colder than ice in the mountain ranges
Where frozen Arctic glaciers flow.

In a barren world where nothing can grow
I sit alone, waiting for the sun
To shine and melt a heart of snow
To find the one who will not run.

To hold me until winter's done,
Someone who will not be afraid
To come close to me, to be the One,
Life's winter palace to invade.

Someone with skin as smooth as jade
To melt these glacier walls of ice
Someone who will not be afraid
To come close to me, just once or twice.

Winter's chill is never nice
For one alone whom live doth shun
Who will melt this house of ice
Which the heat and light of the new spring sun?

Trent Coleman

The Wolves That Wander

Along a lone path I travelled,
Searching for the questions to the answers.
When I came upon a sign that said:
BEWARE OF THE WOLVES THAT WANDER.

Along this lone path I travelled,
Searching for the questions to the answers,
When I came upon a wolf.
I asked him,
“What if man was man, but not thought of as man?”
“What would they do?”

Jab
Poke
Stab
Prod

He growled as he raised his head in pain.

Along this lone path I wandered,
Searching for the questions to the answers,
When I came upon a wolf.
I asked him,
“What if man abandoned his duty as man?”
“What would they do?”

His red-shot eyes pierced my soul as he
turned to me and slurred,

Hate
Hate
Hate

Then staggered; swayed; stumbled.

Along this lone path I wandered,
Searching for the questions to the answers,
When I came upon what I perceived
to be a wolf.
I asked him,
“What if man was man, but, not truly man?”
“What would they do?”

Exhibit
Display
Expose
Violate

He responded as he sat on all fives.

Along this lone path I wandered,
Searching for the questions to the answers
And I stopped to look back
at the wolves that wander.

Alecia Keesman

MANITOBA
(October 8 - 16)

I

He calls it, "the bare-assed prairies"
and there is no better way to describe it.
A myriad of perfect squares checker the land.
Small billows of heat and flame dot the earth
like fairies feasting on Mother Nature's leftovers.
They call it, "burning off stubble."
Why?
Because it doesn't decompose quick enough
before winter's winds come and freeze the earth.
These dots of heat and flame cause smoke.
Clouds of smoke.
Smoke which covers the world with a stench that attacks the nostrils.
A dry taunting acid which hangs with every indrawn breath.
But nobody minds.
It must be done.
And it is not so bad for the land is flat.
"Bare-assed flat."
So the smoke is caught in the wind--
and dissipates.

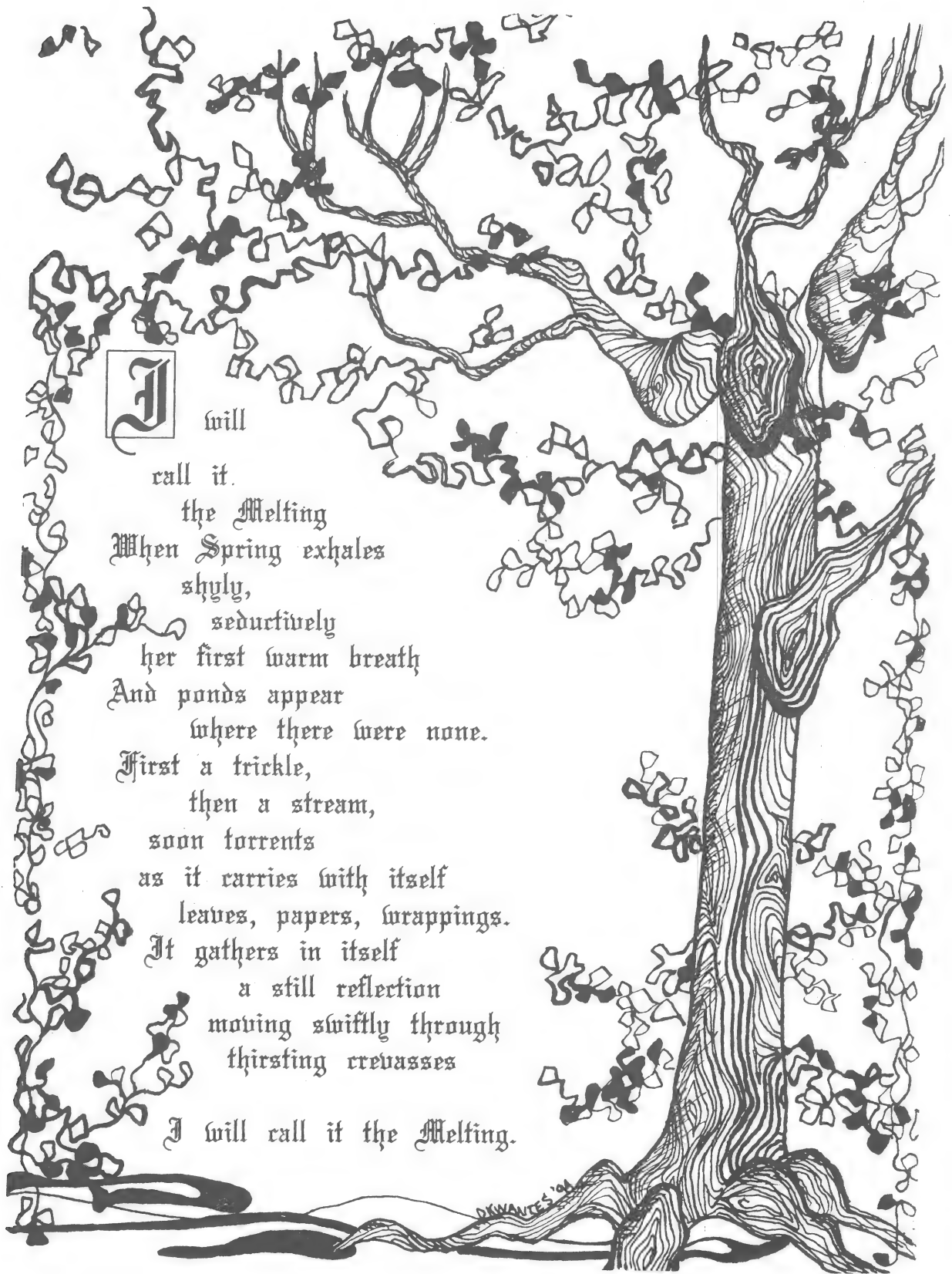
II

The train is the only thing that cuts through the Manitoba night.
Its distant rhythms, and moaning warnings
carry past the sleeping animals
up the stone wall,
and through my northern window.

Visions of natives and bison and histories drift through the mind.
Wild chases.
Hunting cries.
The pillage of a beast running in terror right off the face of the planet.
And the vision is easy to see for the land has not changed.
Yes, maybe the tall field grass has turned to
barley, wheat, and oats--
but really it hasn't changed.

And the land survives,
although with a limp--
it still survives.

Craig Nadon



I will
call it.
the Melting
When Spring exhales
shyly,
seductively
her first warm breath
And ponds appear
where there were none.
First a trickle,
then a stream,
soon torrents
as it carries with itself
leaves, papers, wrappings.
It gathers in itself
a still reflection
moving swiftly through
thirsting crevasses
I will call it the Melting.

Dianne Kwantes

Generation X

The living-room lights in a shower
of television love-

Oprah lost 75 lbs.(again)

Gaze
with wide eyes
Throw your hands
on the sparkling mesh:
a miracle of
eternal coma
may be
yours.

But the price is ripe so
Sell the farm for blue chips,
Ante up where the corporations fall
And brokers lose to the house.

The Final Bell is the only winner,
Even a god to those
Who won't see the ace
Fall from its sleeve.

So deal me out and
Pass
That remote
Control.

Then sleep
and dream of a runaway pixel
dancing in the midnight pitch
rising over all.

Keith Medenblik

ATOMICALLY YOURS (For Fidel and the 60's)

The sky is dense with
clouds rivetted together
(a tin-smith with his sheets of steel.)
Infants sit on the edge of the clouds
crying for mothers never to come.
Thunder slaps the faces of silence out of their slumber
(the bawling looses its mouth.)
With mock surprise Heaven ceases to breathe
and the world comes to an end.

Craig Nadon

Searching

I sat across from a young man.
I asked him,
"Do you think the world's problems can be solved?"
He sat
And he thought
And he opened his mouth.
And said nothing.
I walked away.

I returned to that place and found a young woman.
I asked her,
"Do you think the world's problems can be solved?"
She sat
And she thought
And she opened her mouth
And said nothing.
I walked away.

I returned to that place once more.
I found an old man.
I asked him,
"Do you think the world's problems can be solved?"
He sat
And he thought
And he opened his mouth
And said "Yes".

Krista Veening

Rsenop

Stanvolk taro miaxant tognan mu;
Plyzex noma ci axme tarley barku.
Marthon carlat tras quim sorleyest,
Klapal optar rando noma sing blickest.
Bloppa cerno tlalkona toma jansaben,
Coralang zipno phor mantoplen.
Ki purt sobana trynmanx pallonot
Angu nonas stopal tignot farot.
Soma cordal ister, manzanboya
Ickerblastick noxalt orgamaque taramoya
To those who read this and can't understand
Now know that living and reading do not come hand in hand.
One in four Canadians can't read
They pray that from this nightmare they may be freed.

Jack Klooster

**THE BASIS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE:
(QUESTION MARK?)**

**CARBON AND HYDROGEN ARE THE BASIS OF HYDROCARBON.
HYDROCARBONS ARE THE BASIS OF PETROLEUM.
PETROLEUM IS THE BASIS OF SOCIETY'S ENERGY.
ENERGY IS THE BASIS OF PRODUCTIVITY.
PRODUCTIVITY IS THE BASIS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.**

Assuming that these statements are correct, we as humans have based our existence on a substance which the average four year old would consider offensive.

If you were to place a glass of good, old-fashioned H₂O and a glass of crude oil in front of a four year old, that four year old would be able to tell you which one was "clean" and "good" and which one was "dirty" and "bad."

Meanwhile, those of us who run this tiny orbiting biosphere of life we call Earth, have concocted this grand, glorious, and practically irreversible scheme to run our society on this substance. We have placed our faith, families, and future on a resource which quickly dwindles.

Again I stand in awe, as I often do, at the absolute stupidity of human kind as I presently know it.

Craig Nadon

What About Later?

To live in ecstasy
Or even Cleveland;
Or maybe Wichita.
A place to call my home
Maybe San Antonio
Or possibly even Utah.
A place where people gather;
How about Pittsburgh?
Or what about Buffalo?
A place where I can live,
Either Denver or Dallas
Oakland or Kansas
It can be big or small
Like New York, New York
Or even Milroy Pennsylvania.
But does it really matter
Where on earth you live?

Jack Klooster

A FOREST

You are the forest I have looked upon,
Straining with scarecrow eyes and rugged heart.
As I come near, my soul is but a pawn
Moved by Hebe's hand and radiant art.

Thy voice is nothing short of wondrous song
Alluring love like babe to mother's milk.
The gentle wind does o'er look what I long,
And brush thy silver hair of shimm'ring silk.

And when your eyes gleam forth a crystal gaze
Upon my trembling heart, the earth doth shake
Me with your elegance and grateful ways.
I only chance my hand you won't forsake.

Though beauty unadorned thou dost posses,
And love, for looks, to you I'd give for free;
A deeper glance compels me to confess,
Thy flesh and soul in perfect symmetry.

Richard Tomlin

Asymmetry

There you go again.
Those darkening eyes.
That disapproving gaze.

Who do you think you are?
And why do you think you know me?
You complained once of his pride--
Watch out for that stump hidden among these trees
...Too late--you've tripped and fallen.

But now I'm falling, falling, falling.
I lay in heap at the bottom.
I long to stay here and rest a while--it's safer.

But it's cold.
And lonely.
I'd rather be (with you) in the forest than
Here in this canyon surrounded by impassable rock.
It may be confusing and crowded among these trees.

But at least I would know I'm alive.

Lara Schat

Ode to a Stuffed Purple Lion

A stuffed purple lion
Will not shed,
Does not eat.

When I leave the room
The animals walk, talk
And start to dance.
The purple lion is always
The life of the party

Why won't he speak for me?
I must have said
Something that offended him,
For he never says a word.
He just sits there,
Always with the same
Bored expression.

Does the fluff in his head think?
Will he bleed stuffing if stabbed?
Does he have feelings?
A heart?
Well...?

Everywhere I look
It is there.
When I close my eyes
It is there.
When I sleep it is there.
When I trip and fall down the stairs
It was there.

The beauty of a
Stuffed Purple lion
is only comparable
To that of an
English bull terrier.

In my room it is big.
In my world it is small.

Rebecca Neutel

the farmer and the lens

farmer and the lens
have you heard of them?
i think it's
a farmer and a lens called anthem
but i could be mistaken
i think you're right
question: what are you *doing* here?

i'm the farmer

and i suppose your man is anthem
right?
i wonder if it's his song i'm dancing to
you never did dance to my liking
here comes your lens, farmer
have you heard?
the valiant are frozen

Carl Jagt

A Comment on Poverty

I hear the fire crackle,
and the clanking of the silverware.
My throat tightens
as luring aromas
and waves of tinkling laughter
seep
 through
 the thin walls...

Reality grips my mind.
Nausea harasses me
and threatens my insides,
as I breathe in deeply
 a sweet fragrance -- tainted
with the stench of rotting flesh.

My harsh indifferent face
gazes down,
into the hollow eyes
 of my tired family.
I remember my journey.
I pick up my shovel.

I pass brightly coloured children,
mounting the school bus;
And men and women
wearing diamonds shaped as crosses.
I reach my familiar destiny,
where I continue to dig my hole.

I stood once,
With my shovel in my hand.
When a girl appeared
from a door in the thin wall,
she carried a Bible.
I marvelled at her dress
 with its delicate intricacies.

Her wide, copper eyes
scanned my frail bony body.
The corners of her mouth
 lifted,
in a strained, metal smile.
Hope flickered,
 across my innocent heart.

Suppose she would help me,
and invite me into her flowery home.
I could finally seal up my hole...
Anticipation lifted my head,
and I flashed a toothless,
 misunderstood smile
at her retreating back.

Valerie VanderBerg

His Journey

The trees are dark and foggy cold
He stumbles on a hiding stone
It laughs, and hides again.

The field greys under a pale moon
The bird spies him
Passing through tall pathless grass.

The sea is black shale
A growing chasm
He cannot cross.

The rain soaks through
Searching for bone and bone
As the keening wind silently
Fans the pyre.

Lori Pegg

IV

the room was crowded and dimly lit
you asked me to join the roar
i heard
and when i refused

you told me that if everyone
thought this way
it would become horribly silent and the crowd would
disperse
i did not believe you
and said there was another reason
for being here
someone else asked
are you here to watch?
no i replied

V

and pressed out the light

Carl Jagt

